



U.S. Treasury buys time for Biden and GOP on debt limit deal



The Treasury Department is seen near sunset in Washington, Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2023. .

Associated Press

By JOSH BOAK
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government bumped up against its debt limit Thursday, prompting the Treasury Department to take “extraordinary” accounting steps to avoid default — as friction between President Joe Biden and House Republicans raised concern about whether the U.S. can sidestep an economic crisis. The Treasury Department said in a letter to congressional leaders it had started taking “extraordinary measures” as the government had run up against its legal borrowing capacity of \$31.381 trillion. An artificially imposed cap, the debt ceiling has been increased roughly 80 times since the 1960s. “I respectfully urge Congress to act promptly to protect the full faith and credit of the United States,” Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen wrote in the letter. Markets so far remain relatively calm, given that the government can temporarily rely on accounting tweaks to stay open

and any threats to the economy would be several months away. Even many worried analysts assume there will be a deal. But this particular moment seems more fraught than past brushes with the debt limit because of the broad differences between Biden and new House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, who presides over a restive Republican caucus. Those differences increase the risk that the government could default on its obligations for political reasons. That could rattle financial markets and plunge the world's largest economy into a preventable recession. Biden and McCarthy, R-Calif., have several months to reach agreement as the Treasury Department imposes measures to keep the government operating until at least June. But years of intensifying partisan hostility have led to a conflicting set of demands that jeopardize the ability of the lawmakers to work together on a basic duty.

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U.S. Treasury buys time for Biden and GOP on debt limit deal

Continued from Front

Biden insists on a "clean" increase to the debt limit so that existing financial commitments can be sustained and is refusing to even start talks with Republicans. McCarthy is calling for negotiations that he believes will lead to spending cuts. It's unclear how much he wants to trim and whether fellow Republicans would support any deal after a testy start to the new Congress that required 15 rounds of voting to elect McCarthy as speaker.

Asked twice on Wednesday if there was evidence that House Republicans can ensure the government will avert a default, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said it's their "constitutional responsibility." She did not say whether the White House saw signs at this stage that a default was out of the question.

"We're just not going to negotiate that," Jean-Pierre said. "They should feel the responsibility."

McCarthy said Biden needs to recognize the political realities that come with a divided government. The speaker equates the debt ceiling to a credit card limit and calls for a level of fiscal restraint that did not occur under President Donald Trump, a Republican who in 2019 signed a bipartisan suspension of the debt ceiling. "Why create a crisis over this?" McCarthy said this week. "I mean, we've got a Republican House, a Democratic Senate. We've got the president there. I think it's arrogance to say, 'Oh, we're not going to negotiate about pretty much anything' and especially when it comes to funding." Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell said Thursday in Louisville, Kentucky, that he was unconcerned about the situation because debt ceiling increases are "always a rather contentious effort."

"America must never default on its debt," McConnell said. "We'll end up in some kind of negotiation with the administration

over what are the circumstances or conditions under which the debts are going to be raised."

But any deal would also need to pass the Democratic-run Senate. Many Democratic lawmakers are skeptical about the ability to work with Republicans aligned with the "Make America Great Again" movement started by Trump. The MAGA movement has claimed that the 2020 election lost by Trump was rigged, a falsehood that contributed to the Jan. 6, 2021, insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

"This is not complicated: If the MAGA GOP stops paying our nation's bills, Americans will be the ones to pay the price," said Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "Political brinkmanship with the debt limit would be a massive hit to local economies, American families, and would be nothing less than an economic crisis at the hands of the Republicans."

The debt ceiling was originally a fix made during World War I that enabled bonds to be issued without requiring repeated congressional approvals. But in an era of polarization and rising debt loads, the limit has been transformed into a political bludgeon. It does not reflect the actual capacity of the federal government to borrow, simply how much it is legally able to do so without congressional signoff.

In order to keep the government open, the Treasury Department on Thursday was making a series of accounting maneuvers that would put a hold on contributions and investment redemptions for government workers' retirement and health care funds, giving the government enough financial space to handle its day-to-day expenses until roughly June.

What happens if these measures are exhausted without a debt limit deal is unknown. A prolonged

default could be devastating, with crashing markets and panic-driven layoffs if confidence evaporated in a cornerstone of the global economy, the U.S. Treasury note.

Analysts at Bank of America cautioned in a report last week that "there is a high degree of uncertainty about the speed and magnitude of the damage the U.S. economy would incur." The underlying challenge is that the government would have to balance its books on a daily basis if it lacks the ability to issue debt. If the government cannot issue debt, it would have to impose cuts equal in size on an annual basis to 5% of the total U.S. economy. Analysts say their baseline case is that the U.S. avoids default.

Still, if past debt ceiling showdowns such as the one that occurred in 2011 are any guide, Washington may be in a nervous state of suspended animation with little progress until

the "X-date," the deadline when the Treasury's "extraordinary measures" are depleted.

Unlike the 2011 showdown, the Federal Reserve is actively raising interest rates to lower inflation and is rolling off its own holdings of U.S. debt, meaning that recession fears are already elevated among consumers, businesses and investors. Biden administration officials have said they will not prioritize payments to bondholders if the country passes the "X-date" without an agreement. Over the years, officials have studied this emergency option, which Treasury officials across administration have said is unworkable because of the government's payments system.

"To some extent, the 'extraordinary measures' are the backup plan, and once those are exhausted the next step is a major question mark," economists at Wells Fargo wrote in a Thursday analysis. □



Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen speaks with reporters during a visit to the Virginia Innovation Partnership Corporation incubator at the Center for Innovative Technology campus in Herndon, Va., Oct. 21, 2022.

Associated Press

U.S. citizens get chance to play role in resettling refugees

By REBECCA SANTANA

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A

government program launched Thursday is giving American citizens the chance to play a role in resettling the thousands of refugees who arrive every year in the United States.

During the first year of the Welcome Corps, the State Department aims to line up 10,000 Americans who can help 5,000 refugees adjust to life in the United States.

"By tapping into the goodwill of American communities, the Welcome Corps will expand our country's capacity to provide a warm welcome to higher numbers of refugees," the department said in announcing the effort.

When refugees from around the world arrive in the U.S., they face a dramatically different way of life. To ease that transition, the department traditionally has worked with nonprofit groups that specialize in refugee issues. Under the new program, five or more Americans could form a group and help fill this role,



The State Department seal is seen on the briefing room lectern at the State Department in Washington, Jan. 31, 2022.

as well. They would apply to privately sponsor refugees to resettle in the U.S. and would be responsible for raising their own money to help the refugees over the first 90 days. Assistance would include everything from greeting refugees at the airport to finding them place to live and getting

kids enrolled in school.

A consortium of nonprofits with expertise in refugee resettlement will help oversee the vetting and certification of people and groups who want to be private sponsors. They also will offer training so private sponsors understand what's needed to help refugees adjusting

to life in America. The consortium will be responsible for monitoring the program. The program will roll out in two phases. First, private sponsors will be matched with refugees already approved for resettlement under the U.S. Refugee Assistance Program. That will start during the first half of

2023.

Later, private sponsors could identify refugees abroad they would like to help and then refer those people to the Refugee Assistance Program and assist them once they arrive in the U.S.

The program is different from a recent initiative that allows 30,000 people into the country a month from Nicaragua, Cuba, Haiti and Venezuela. They also need a sponsor but are being admitted to the U.S. under a humanitarian parole designation that lasts two years and offers no path to becoming permanent residents or citizens.

Under the refugee program, people fleeing violence or persecution can come to the U.S. and stay permanently. Since the Refugee Act was passed in 1980 the U.S. has admitted a little over 3 million refugees. The Welcome Corps program comes on the heels of a similar, smaller scale endeavor under which Americans were able to sponsor Afghans or Ukrainians. □

Associated Press

U.S. union membership rate hits all-time low despite campaigns

By DEE-ANN DURBIN

AP Business Writer

The U.S. union membership rate reached an all-time low last year despite high-profile unionization campaigns at Starbucks, Amazon and other companies. Union members fell to 10.1% of the overall U.S. workforce, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. That was down slightly from 10.3% in 2021.

The number of workers belonging to a union actually increased by 1.9% to 14.3 million. But that failed to keep pace with higher overall employment rates. The number of wage- and salary-earning workers rose by 3.9%, the government said.

U.S. union membership has been falling steadily for decades. In 1983, the first year

that comparable data is available, the union membership rate was 20.1%, the government said.

Public-sector workers, like police and teachers, had the highest unionization rates last year, at 33%. Just 6% of private-sector workers were unionized.

Automation, outsourcing and lower unionization rates in traditional union strongholds, like auto manufacturing, are one reason for the steady decline. But states have also chipped away at unions' power. Twenty-seven states now have "right-to-work" laws, which prohibit a company and a union from signing a contract that requires workers to pay dues to the union that represents them. Despite those laws, support for unions has been grow-

ing. In a survey published in August, Gallup found that 71% of Americans said they approve of labor unions, the highest percentage recorded since 1965.

As the pandemic has eased, there has been a surge in demand for unionization. Labor shortages gave workers a rare upper hand, which they used to seek higher pay and benefits from their employers. The National Labor Relations Board reported a 53% increase in union representation petitions in its 2022 fiscal year, which ended Sept. 30. A total of 2,510 petitions were filed with the agency, the highest number since 2016.

Dan Cornfield, a sociology professor at Vanderbilt University who studies unions, noted that while unioniza-



Amazon JFK8 distribution center union organizer Jason Anthony speaks to media, April 1, 2022, in the Brooklyn borough of New York.

Associated Press

tion rates are declining in some sectors, like telecommunications and clothing manufacturing, they're rising in others, including hospitality, the arts and entertainment. Younger workers are largely driving those efforts, he said.

"Those actions and attitudes could portend a reversal of this long-term decline," Cornfield said.

Workers at more than 270 U.S. Starbucks stores have voted to unionize over the last year, an effort that Starbucks opposes. □

Flavored cannabis marketing is criticized for targeting kids

By **BOBBY CAINA CALVAN**
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When New York's first licensed recreational marijuana outlet opened last month, the chief of the state's Office of Cannabis Management, Chris Alexander, proudly hoisted a tin of watermelon-flavored gummies above the crowd.

Outside the Manhattan shop, he displayed another purchase: a jar containing dried flowers of a cannabis strain called Banana Runtz, which some aficionados say has overtones of "fresh, fruity banana and sour candy."

Inside the store run by the nonprofit Housing Works, shelves brimmed with vape cartridges suggesting flavors of pineapple, grapefruit and "cereal milk," written in rainbow bubble letter print.

For decades, health advocates have chided the tobacco industry for marketing harmful nicotine products to children, resulting in more cities and states, like New York, outlawing flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes.

Now as cannabis shops proliferate across the country, the same concerns are



Cannabis vaping products are showcased at Housing Works, New York's first legal cannabis dispensary, Thursday Dec. 29, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

growing over the packaging and marketing of flavored cannabis that critics say could entice children to partake of products labeled "mad mango," "loud lemon" and "peach dream." "We should learn from the nicotine space, and I certainly would advocate that we should place similar concern on cannabis products in terms of their appealability to youth," said Katherine Keyes, a

professor of epidemiology at Columbia University who has written extensively about the rise in marijuana use among young people. "If you go through a cannabis dispensary right now," she said, "it's almost absurd how youth oriented a lot of the packaging and the products are."

Keyes added that public health policymakers and researchers like her are trying to catch up with an

industry and marketplace that is rapidly expanding and evolving. New York, which legalized recreational marijuana in March 2021, forbids marketing and advertising that "is designed in any way to appeal to children or other minors."

But New York's state Office of Cannabis Management has yet to officially adopt rules on labeling, packaging and advertising that could ban cartoons and

neon colors, as well as prohibit depictions of food, candy, soda, drinks, cookies or cereal on packaging all of which, the agency suggests, could attract people under 21.

"Consumers need to be aware parents need to be aware if they see products that look like other products that are commonly marketed to kids, that's an illicit market product," said Lyla Hunt, OCM's deputy director of public health and campaigns.

Hunt recently saw a cannabis product calling itself "Stony Patch Kids" that she said looked like the popular candy "Sour Patch Kids."

Similar products are being sold by the dozens of illegal pot dispensaries that operate out in the open and that officials worry are selling unsafe products. Once packaging and marketing standards are established, the illicit marketplace will likely not comply, experts say. "We can regulate until we're blue in the face. But the truth is, it's a partnership between a compliant industry, strong regulations that are robust in their protections for youth and then with parents, too," Hunt said. □

Settlement reached over Philly-area school abuse claims

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A \$3 million settlement will establish a fund for former students as part of a lawsuit alleging abuse and deprivation of education at a now-shuttered Pennsylvania juvenile justice facility.

Former Glen Mills Schools students could receive

both cash payments for those who experienced or witnessed abuse and funds to pay for or reimburse educational expenses after a settlement Wednesday with Chester County Intermediate Unit as part of an ongoing federal class action lawsuit.

Formerly the nation's oldest reform school, Glen Mills Schools had its licenses revoked in 2019. The state ordered the removal of all children following the Philadelphia Inquirer's investigation detailing the alleged abuse.

The complaint filed by the Education Law Center, Juvenile Law Center and Dechert LLP on behalf of former students asserts that

the intermediate unit failed in its oversight responsibilities and duties with students with disabilities.

In a statement, the Chester County Intermediate Unit said it disagrees with the depiction of its role over Glen Mills, but "protracted litigation will not benefit the young adults who contend they received an inferior education while at the Glen Mills Schools."

Lawyers said 1,600 students who meet certain age limitations are eligible to file for the fund. The distribution of awards is slated to begin next year.

"We do believe that this is an important starting point to support these students to remedy the deep

harm that they have experienced," said Maura McNerney, legal director at the Education Law Center. "And it's important that it's happening at this time when the students can use it to really change the trajectory of their futures."

Other named defendants in the ongoing lawsuit are Glen Mills Schools and former Glen Mills Schools staff, plus officials at Pennsylvania Department of Human Services and Pennsylvania Department of Education. Court proceedings continue this month. A trial date is still to be determined.

The lawsuit is among other legal filings against Glen Mills School by former students. □



The Glen Mills Schools is seen on March 27, 2020, in Glen Mills, Pa.

Associated Press

EU border chief pledges transparency, no illegal pushbacks

By **SAMUEL PETREQUIN**

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The new executive director of European Union border agency Frontex pledged Thursday to ensure that illegal pushbacks of migrants trying to reach Europe wouldn't take place under his watch. Hans Leijten was appointed as a replacement for Fabrice Leggeri, who resigned last year following media allegations that the agency was involved in that practice. A report by EU anti-fraud watchdog OLAF into Frontex later concluded that employees from the agency were involved in covering up pushbacks of migrants from Greece to Turkey.

Pushbacks forcing would-be refugees away from a border before they can reach a country and claim asylum are considered violations of international refugee protection agreements, which say people shouldn't be expelled or returned to a country where their life and safety might be in danger because of their race, religion, nationality or being members of a social or political group. "Pushbacks by Frontex officers are not legal. They are forbidden," Leijten said during a news conference



European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson, right, and new Executive Director of the European Border and Coast Guard, FRONTEX, Hans Leijten, left, address a media conference at EU headquarters in Brussels, Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023.

Associated Press

with Ylva Johansson, the EU commissioner for home affairs. "I'm responsible for the fact that my people don't participate in ... pushbacks."

Leijten will start his new job on March 1.

According to the OLAF report made public in October, top managers at Frontex committed "serious misconduct and other irregularities" in covering up pushback incidents, not investigating them or not handling them correctly.

Leijten said "there is nothing secret about Frontex" and that he would promote a nothing-to-hide attitude while improving transparency and putting an end to "defensive attitudes."

"We can't do our work when we are not trusted," he said. Leijten's nomination comes as the EU's 27 member countries struggle to make progress in discussions over a long-delayed overhaul of the bloc's asylum system proposed by the EU's executive arm

more than two years ago. The number of attempts by migrants to enter the EU without authorization reached around 330,000 last year, the highest number since 2016, the EU's border and coast guard agency said last week. Johansson said the increase is mainly due to the arrivals of citizens likely not in need of international protection, who need to be returned to their country of origin. "Frontex is well equipped to

actually support the member states," she said, adding that the agency last year carried out the return of 25,000 people.

Johansson added that she will next week present a new strategy on returns next week before a summit of EU leaders in February. She also exhorted EU countries to step up their cooperation with Frontex for a better management of returns.

Johansson cited a rise in arrivals to the EU by Bangladeshis, with most of them not in need of international protection. She said that after Bangladesh was put on a list of visas sanctions, local authorities improved their cooperation and are now open to taking back their citizens.

"But we are also in a situation where member states only do readmission requests for approximately 10% to 20% of the return decisions" she said. "And when Frontex are flying the planes to Bangladesh (...), they are not full. When we have a political momentum with a third country, it's important that we work together: (the European) Commission, Frontex, all member states, to really make these returns happen." □

'Help': Colombia rescues sailor adrift in Caribbean 24 days

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)

— The Colombian navy rescued a man from Dominica who says he survived 24 days adrift in the Caribbean on a sailboat by eating ketchup, garlic powder and seasoning cubes.

Elvis Francois, 47, had scrawled the word "help" in English on the boat's hull, which officials said was key to his rescue.

The sailboat was spotted from the air 120 nautical miles northwest of La Guajira peninsula and Francois was taken to the port city of Cartagena by a passing container ship, the Colombian navy said in a statement Wednesday.

Francois told Colombian

authorities that his ordeal began in December when currents swept the sailboat out to sea while he was making repairs off the island of St. Martin in the Netherlands Antilles, where he lives.

"I called my friends, they tried to contact me, but I lost the signal. There was nothing else to do but sit and wait," Francois recalled in a video released by the navy.

He said subsisted on a bottle of ketchup, garlic powder and Maggi cubes.

Cmdr.

Carlos Urbano Montes told The Associated Press on Thursday that Francois said he collected rainwater with

a cloth. He said Francois was found in good health, but told official he had lost weight.

Francois said on the videotape that he had to constantly remove water from the boat to prevent it from sinking. He also tried to light a fire to send a distress signal without success.

Finally, a plane passed by and he signaled with a mirror. He said the navy told him that he was spotted when the plane passed again.

"At some point I lost hope and thought about my family, but I thank the coast guard. If it weren't for them I wouldn't be telling the story," Francois said. □



In this photo provided by Colombia's Navy press office, castaway Elvis Francois is attended by Colombian Navy members after he was rescued near the department of La Guajira, in the extreme north of Colombia, as he sits on board the merchant ship CMA CGM Voltario at the port of Cartagena, Colombia, Monday, Jan. 16, 2023.

Associated Press

Peru's Andes 'descended' on capital to demand leader resign

By **DANIEL POLITI** and **FRANKLIN BRICEÑO**
Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — People poured into Peru's coastal capital, many from remote Andean regions, for a protest Thursday against President Dina Boluarte and in support of her predecessor, whose ouster last month launched deadly unrest and cast the nation into political chaos.

There was a tense calm in the streets of Lima Thursday morning ahead of the protest that supporters of former president Pedro Castillo hope will open a new chapter in the weeks-long movement to demand Boluarte's resignation, the dissolution of Congress, immediate elections and structural change in the country. Castillo, Peru's first leader from a rural Andean background, was impeached after a failed attempt to dissolve Congress. "We have delinquent ministers, presidents that murder and we live like animals in the middle of so much wealth that they steal from us every day," Samuel Ace-ro, a farmer who heads up the regional committee of protests for the southeastern city Cusco, said as he walked in downtown Lima Thursday morning. "We want Dina Boluarte to leave, she lied to us."

The protests have so far been held mainly in Peru's southern Andes, with 53 people dying amid the unrest, the large majority killed in clashes with security forces.

"We're at a breaking point between dictatorship and democracy," said Pedro Mamani, a student at the National University of San Marcos.

Students there are housing demonstrators who traveled to Peru's capital for the protest that is being popularly referred to as the "takeover of Lima."

The university was surrounded by police officers, who also congregated at several key points of Lima's historic downtown district.

A total of 11,800 police



Police officers pick up a tear gas canister that was thrown back at them by anti-government protesters who traveled to the capital from across the country to march against Peruvian President Dina Boluarte in Lima, Peru, Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2023.

Associated Press

officers will be deployed throughout Lima, Victor Zanabria, the head of the police force there told local media. He played down the size of the protests, saying he expected around 2,000 people to participate.

The demonstrations that erupted last month and subsequent clashes with security forces amount to the worst political violence Peru has experienced in more than two decades and has shined a spotlight on the deep divisions that exist in the country between the urban elite largely concentrated in Lima and the poor rural areas, where citizens have often feel relegated. "In my own country, the voices of the Andes, the voices of the majority have been silenced," Florencia Fernández, a lawyer who lives in Cusco, said Wednesday ahead of the protest. "We've had to travel to this aggressive city, this centralist city, and we say, the Andes have descended."

By bringing the protest to Lima, demonstrators hope to give fresh weight to the movement that began when Boluarte, who was the vice president, was sworn into office on Dec. 7 to replace Castillo.

"When there are tragedies,

bloodbaths outside the capital it doesn't have the same political relevance in the public agenda than if it took place in the capital," said Alonso Cárdenas, a professor of public policies at the Antonio Ruiz de Montoya University in Lima. "The leaders have understood that and say, they can massacre us in Cusco, in Puno, and nothing happens, we need to take the protest to Lima," Cárdenas added, citing two cities that have seen protest violence.

The concentration of protesters in Lima also reflects how the capital has started to see more antigovernment demonstrations in recent days.

"Lima, which hadn't joined the protests at all in the first phase in December, decided to join after the Juliaca massacre," Omar Coronel, a political science professor at the Catholic University of Peru, said, referring to the 18 people killed in that southern city on Jan. 9.

The protesters on Thursday are planning to march from downtown Lima to the Miraflores district, one of the emblematic neighborhoods of the country's economic elite.

The government has called on protesters to be peace-

ful.

"We know they want to take over Lima," Boluarte said this week. "I call on them to take over Lima, yes, but in peace" and added that she would "wait for them in the Government House to be able to talk about their social agendas."

Boluarte has said she supports a plan to push up to 2024 elections for president and congress originally scheduled for 2026.

Many protesters say that no dialogue is possible with a government that they say has unleashed so much violence against its citizens. As protesters gathered in Lima, more violence erupted in southern Peru.

In the town of Macusani Wednesday, protesters set fire to the police station and judicial office after two people were killed and another seriously injured by gunfire amid antigovernment protests.

The officers had to escape the police station that the crowd burned in a helicopter, police said. Macusani, about 160 kilometers from the city of Juliaca near Lake Titicaca, is the capital of the province of Carabaya.

Activists have dubbed Thursday's demonstration in Lima as the Cuatro Suyos

March, a reference to the four cardinal points of the Inca empire. It's also the same name that was given to another massive mobilization that took place in 2000, when thousands of Peruvians took to the streets against the autocratic government of Alberto Fujimori, who resigned months later. There are several key differences between those demonstrations and this week's protests.

"In 2000, the people protested against a regime that was already consolidated in power," Cardenas said. "In this case, they're standing up to a government that has only been in power for a month and is incredibly fragile."

Another distinction is that the 2000 protests had a centralized leadership and were led by political parties. "Now what we have is something much more fragmented," Coronel said. The protests that have engulfed much of Peru in the past month have largely been grassroots efforts without a clear leadership. "We have never seen a mobilization of this magnitude, there's already a thought installed in the peripheries that it is necessary, urgent to transform everything," said Gustavo Montoya, a historian at the National University of San Marcos. "I have the feeling that we're witnessing a historic shift."

The protests have grown to such a degree that demonstrators are unlikely to be satisfied with Boluarte's resignation and they are now demanding a more fundamental structural reform.

The protests have emerged "in regions that have been systematically treated as second-class citizens," Montoya said.

"I think this will only keep growing."

Analysts warn that a failure to listen to demands from protesters could have tragic consequences.

"We have to start to think what we want to do with Peru, otherwise this could all blow up," Cardenas said. □

Community invited to give our royal family a warm welcome during royal visit

Various opportunities to greet the royal family in Oranjestad and San Nicolas

ORANJESTAD – Prime Minister of Aruba, Evelyn Wever-Croes had a meeting with the commission installed to prepare for the royal visit. King of the Netherlands, Willem-Alexander, Queen Maxima and Crown Princess Amalia are visiting Aruba on January 30 and 31. On the first of February they depart for Curaçao.

Wever-Croes said that the beautiful program prepared for the visit to Aruba includes many opportunities for the people of Aruba – and our beloved visitors! – can meet the royal family, particularly Princess Amalia since it will be her first time visiting Aruba.

On January 30, when the king, queen and princess arrive in Aruba, they will leave the airport and head

to the Wilhelmina Park where there will be different activities and members of the military. Here, school children and other members of the community will be present to greet and welcome the royal family. After Wilhelmina Park the delegation will walk to the Ceremonial House of the Governor for a meeting with the Governor of Aruba. After this they will be walking on the main road towards the Parliament of Aruba.

Following this visit the royal delegation will walk towards the main center of the government, Cocolishi. Afterwards the delegation will depart for the hotel for a short break.

Following the break, the entire delegation will go to

San Nicolas. The first visit will be at Filomena College for a presentation of a mural honoring our World War II hero, Boy Ecury.

Afterwards they will visit the Industrial Museum of Aruba. Following this visit, the delegation will get to see the murals and art in San Nicolas.

This visit will conclude in Nicolaas Store, where the royal guests will be delighted with a cultural demonstration.

After leaving Nicolaas Store, the delegation will arrive at the Marinierskazerne – the marine barracks.

The second day on Tuesday will begin early morning with a hike in Aruba's nature, starting at the Franse Pas, the gold mine ruins.



Following the walk the delegation will visit the Visitors' Center of the park and see the center of farming where certain special plants are being grown and will be introduced to the project.

Following the park, the royal delegation will visit Aruba Aloe, which recently received the title "royal". Afterwards they will enjoy a lunch at the Wilhelmina Restaurant, and continue on to the University of Aruba, where they will meet with lecturers and students.

Following this visit the King and princess will depart for the Frans Figaroa Sports Center. The Queen will visit Credits Aruba.

The program for the royal visit will end with a visit to Fort Zoutman, which will begin on Plaza Padu.

Afterwards they will enter Fort Zoutman where they will experience a portion of Bon Bini Festival.

Prime Minister Wever-Croes indicated that during the two-day visit, the royal family wants to be in touch with the people and experience Aruba.

The Government of Aruba invites our entire community to prepare and bring the children to meet the royal family of the Netherlands. "Let's show them the cordiality that we know in Aruba and let's give them a warm welcome." □

MoU signed for project enhancing Eagle Beach Strip

ORANJESTAD – This week, minister of Tourism and Public Health, Mr. Dangui Oduber made an important announcement regarding the enhancement of our product Aruba. This time, it is the project to improve the strip of Eagle Beach from the roundabout at Amsterdam Manor to the roundabout of Alhambra.

This project will be financed by the Tourism Product Enhancement Fund (TPEF) and Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA).

According to a press release, this is a beautiful project where the public and private sector will be working together. The public sector will make investments and the private sector is committing to carry out the necessary maintenance in the years ahead of us.

Monday night during a ceremony, minister Oduber together with all General Managers of the properties on the strip where the enhancement will take place, as well as the president of



the board of TPEF, Mr. Mario Arends, signed a MoU where all parties are committed to each other.

This project will be realized in two phases. The first phase will begin in the upcoming days. In total, the public sector is investing a significant amount in this project while the private sector will invest in maintenance of the project.

According to the press release this is a new model chosen by the ministry of Tourism in order to allow

the private sector to also actively participate in the maintenance of different projects. This makes the project unique and a good model for the future. It is proof that by cooperating and working together more can be achieved.

This way we can guarantee that the project will be sustainable and will elevate the product Aruba.

The project will see the enhancement of the entire strip of Eagle Beach, where the landscape will be uni-

formed with flora and white stones in order for it to be better organized and structured. The idea is for the entire strip to look the same, creating a better feeling for our visitors. More trash bins will also be installed on the strip in order to improve waste management in the area.

Finally, minister Oduber thanked the board of TPEF, ATA and all the General Managers of the properties for their collaboration in the project. □



JUMP18 project giving great results



ORANJESTAD – JUMP18 is a multidisciplinary program by Dr. Horacio Oduber Hospital to help children deal with obesity.

There is currently one group of children actively participating in JUMP18 under professional guidance. The program of 6 months will end in February 2023. This program is in synch with the national noncommuni-

cable diseases (NCDs) prevention plan.

JUMP18 consists of a group of young medical professionals, under a pediatrician's guidance, who developed an initiative to empower these children and their parents to improve their health and well-being. The goal of JUMP18 is to help parents and children lead a healthier life through

education and exercise to challenge their limited perceptions.

Through this process, they created access for the parents and their children to discover their values in combination with in-depth knowledge about nutrition and health.

JUMP18 started on September 14, 2021, to make a



difference in others, inspire and motivate. Through this program, it creates new opportunities for all involved, like the parents, the professionals but mainly the children. Jump18 has a duration of 6 months and initially started with 18 children but has since grown to 36. The Minister of Tour-

ism and Public Health, Dangui Oduber, is happy with the results of Jump18 and is grateful to Dr. Jamiu Busari who founded JUMP18 and is the senior researcher for this program. The minister also thanks the professional team of JUMP18 for their generous and valuable contribution to JUMP18. □



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Preparations for Royal visit

The Council of Ministers is busy with the final preparations for the upcoming visit of King Willem Alexander, Queen Maxima, and Princess Amalia.

The last Royal visit to Aruba was eight years ago when the King and the Queen visited the islands. It will be the first visit that includes Princess Amalia. The Government of Aruba is preparing a warm welcome for the Royal family.

King Willem Alexander and his family will meet first with the Governor of Aruba, followed by a visit to the Parliament of Aruba and the Government of Aruba. Between these visits, the entire community has the opportunity to salute the King, the Queen, and Princess. The activities for the Royal family will take place in San Nicolas and Oranjestad, giving the commu-

nity many opportunities to greet and see the Royal family along the routes and introduce their children to the King, the Queen, and the Princes of the Dutch Kingdom.

Since the announcement of the Royal family, there is enthusiasm and excitement in the community. That is why the Government is hoping that schools will also jump on board the

Royal visit enthusiasm and that businesses decorate their stores to welcome the Royal family to Aruba.

More information about the Royal program, including date, time, and location will be shared with the community once ready. The Government extends a cordial invitation to the community and its visitors to attend these events. □



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Aruba to me



ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive?

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reader every day again. For today we received a lovely message from Griseldy Gross and Janet Spits-Gross, who were born in the Dominican Republic but are now living in Belgium and The Netherlands.

They wrote to us saying; Aruba to us means.. HOME! Coming back every year to Aruba to spend time with our family means the world to us. Being able to hug mom and dad, laugh with our sisters and make new

memories with our nieces who each year grow bigger and more beautiful gives Aruba an irreplaceable spot in our hearts. We never forget to eat our mother's homecooked meals and the amazing food that Aruba offers that we can't find elsewhere.

Being able to visit Aruba year after year and seeing the amazing nature and beauty the Island offers us brings us great joy. And of course, it's an added plea-

sure to have the wonderful feeling of vacation and the wonderful pictures and memories to bring home and brag about with our friends.

We would change it for anything in the world!"

Thank you for sending us this beautiful message sharing with our readers what Aruba means to you. We hope you enjoyed your stay and we can't wait to have you back! □

Another Treasure of Aruba's Beaches: Sea Glass!



NOORD - It is hard to imagine this happening today, but years ago people dumped all kinds of refuse straight into the ocean, including old cars, and their household garbage, which of course included lots of glass. Over the next 30 years the pounding waves cleaned the beach, by breaking down everything but glass and pottery. The pounding waves washed the trash up and down, back and forth. Tons of polished, broken glass pieces were created by the pounding surf. These smoothened, colored glass particles then settled along the sea shore in millions, and that is why you can find these beautiful and colorful pieces on the north shore beaches of Aruba.

Especially on the strip on white sand between the famous Natural Bridge" and the huge red anchor close to "Grapefield" beach you will be able to find your own pieces of sea glass. The sea glass that was created is the product of a very long and interesting process. It can take anywhere from 10 to 30 years to make sea glass. The name for any piece of glass that finds its way to the ocean and tumbles around in the water long enough is "Sea glass.

The colorful pieces of glass are being used for decoration, handcrafts and jewelry!

Once glass makes its way into the ocean, the glass is broken up into shards and is tumbled around in the water, where sand and other



rocks act like sandpaper to smooth out its rough edges. Sometimes as the sea glass is passed through fire, it becomes fire glass, the rarest of sea glass with certain inclusions, just like precious gems.

For years, the water beat

against the different kinds of trash being dumped. Glass, household appliances and even motor parts were discarded on the beach. The waves and weather conditions wore down the overwhelming amount of garbage in the water, creating millions of beautiful smooth rocks.

It's hard to believe the short-sighted mistakes we were making that could have potentially ruined these beautiful beaches. But thanks to natural processes, the ocean transformed the trash into the sea glass.

Each colored gem on the beach has its own story.

The ruby red glass stones are typically from old car tail-lights.

Then, the sapphire rocks are the remnants of broken apothecary bottles. The most common and the easiest to find are the brown (Amstel & Polar beer), green (Heineken & Balashi beer) and clear

glass which are the soft much loved "soft drink" bottles.

If you like to see the sea glass for yourself, and be in awe of the power of nature, rent a car or jeep and go explore our deserted beaches on the north side of the island. Make it a fun family day!

Even if we didn't mean to pollute the Beaches how we did, it is inspiring to see just how the earth can correct our mistakes.

Funny, how trash can change into treasures!

Everybody knows that you are not allowed to take local shells home, but the people working at the airport have no problem you taking sea glass home. A few of those pieces make great souvenirs.

You can place them in a wine glass or large bottle for decoration and every time you look at it a smile will light up your face thinking back of your unforgettable Aruba vacation! ☐



History of Carnival in Aruba

(VisitAruba.com) – Each year in January and February, Aruba celebrates another edition of its popular and impressive Carnival season. The incredible atmosphere and cultural diversity during carnival is definitely something that you need to experience. Carnival has its origins in the 1920s, and it evolved through different cultural influences to arrive to what we know and love today.

1921-1945

The first signs of Carnival celebrations began in 1921, when some of



the many social clubs would have parties with costumes. These parties would take place at the venues of the social clubs and were primarily elite balls with European style, like debutant balls and costume parties to celebrate the festivities of the season. After some years, the Americans in San Nicolas who were working at the Lago Refinery introduced their own celebrations for the season, with American style. These seasonal festivities were mainly centered around Halloween, Christmas and Carnival, and became the first step on the road to the carnival celebrations that we know today.

1945-1954

During these years, the Lago Refinery began reaching its employment peak, with most of the recruiting done in the English-speaking islands in the Caribbean, namely Trinidad, Jamaica and British Guyana. These English-speaking migrants were the first to organize a parade in San Nicolas for the allied victory in World War II. It was these immigrants who enriched Aruba's Trinidadian-style Carnival.

Meanwhile, the carnival celebrations of Carnival at the social clubs were becoming bigger and bigger. Every club had a Carnival



Queen election on the island, and the first parades were organized by Aruba's oldest social club, Tivoli.

1954-1965

The third era of Aruba's carnival began when the native Aruban and English groups joined to plan the first public carnival for the entire island, under a (temporary) Central Carnival Committee. With Club Tivoli as a host, the representatives of various social clubs held a meeting to coordinate their efforts for a single, unique Carnival parade in Oranjestad, combining steelband, floats and musicians in costumes and masks. The Carnival Committee organized the first Carnival Queen election.

the 11th month, known as Fools Day. The Committee was the main organizer of the Carnival festivities, however, it was not the only one: In 1981, Tivoli Social Club established the Lighting Parade.

Nowadays, Aruba's Carnival has grown to become one of the biggest in the Caribbean, with an entire month of parades and activities.

For more information, visit <https://www.visitaruba.com/things-to-do/carnival/arubas-carnival-history/> To see more photographs of the history of Aruba's carnival, visit the archives of the National Library of Aruba <https://archive.org/search?query=carnaval+aruba>

In 1957, the tradition of having two big parades began; the first in San Nicolas and the second in the capital of Oranjestad. After eight years, Calypso and Roadmarch became an integral part of the Carnival season with the introduction of Calypso contests.

1966-present

The first year of this era was known for the establishment of SAC – The Aruban Carnival Foundation. This committee was founded at exactly 11:11am on the 11th day of



OFFICIAL EVENTS SCHEDULE		
SUNDAY JAN 08	PRINS & PANTHO ELECTIONS PLAZA LIBERTADOR G.F. BETICO CROES	7:00PM - 12:00AM
SATURDAY JAN 14	QUEEN ELECTION COLEGIO EPI ARUBA ENTERTAINMENT CENTER	6:30PM - 12:00AM
FRIDAY JAN 20	TUMBERTO - C&Y CALYPSO & ROADMARCH CONTEST ARUBA ENTERTAINMENT CENTER	6:00PM - 11:00PM
SATURDAY JAN 21	CHILDREN & YOUTH QUEEN ELECTION PLAZA LIBERTADOR G.F. BETICO CROES	6:00PM - 12:00AM
SUNDAY JAN 22	CARNIVAL QUEEN & MRS CARNIVAL ELECTION PLAZA LIBERTADOR G.F. BETICO CROES	7:00PM - 12:00AM
WEDNESDAY JAN 25	DIA DI BETICO	
FRIDAY JAN 27	EVENT ARUBA CAISO & SOCA MONARCH 2023 ARUBA CARNIVAL & ENTERTAINMENT VILLAGE	8:00PM
SATURDAY JAN 28	CAISO & SOCA MONARCH FINALS ARUBA CARNIVAL & ENTERTAINMENT VILLAGE	8:00PM
SUNDAY JAN 29	PARADA DI BLAAS SAN NICOLAS	2:00PM - 6:00PM
THURSDAY FEB 02	LA ORA LOCA JUMP UP SANTA CRUZ	8:00PM - 1:00AM
FRIDAY FEB 03	HEBBE HEBBE CARNIVAL HARBOUR ARENA	8:00PM - 2:00AM
FRIDAY FEB 03	BAN BULA DEN DRIVE IN TRUCK FEST 2023 DRIVE INN	7:00PM - 2:00AM
SATURDAY FEB 04	CHILDREN'S PARADE NOORD NOORD	2:00PM - 6:00PM
SATURDAY FEB 04	FESTIVAL DI TUMBA BALASHI BEER GARDEN	8:00PM - 2:00AM
SUNDAY FEB 05	TRANSFER OF COMMAND BESTUURSKANTOOR - COCOLUSHI	10:00AM - 12:00PM
SUNDAY FEB 05	GRAND CHILDREN'S PARADE ORANJESTAD ORANJESTAD	2:00PM - 6:00PM
WEDNESDAY FEB 08	SUNSET PARADE NOORD	7:00PM - 1:00AM
FRIDAY FEB 10	CAYA PADEN RENAISSANCE CONVENTION CENTER	8:00PM - 2:00AM
FRIDAY FEB 10	WELCOME TO JOUVERT ARUBA CARNIVAL & ENTERTAINMENT VILLAGE	8:00PM - 3:00AM
SATURDAY FEB 11	JOUVERT MORNING SAN NICOLAS	3:00AM - 9:00AM
SATURDAY FEB 11	ARUBA'S GRAND LIGHTING PARADE ORANJESTAD	8:00PM - 2:00AM
SUNDAY FEB 12	GRAND CHILDREN'S PARADE SAN NICOLAS SAN NICOLAS	2:00PM - 6:00PM
SUNDAY FEB 12	BURNING OF MOMITO ARUBA CARNIVAL & ENTERTAINMENT VILLAGE	6:00PM - 8:00PM
THURSDAY FEB 16	PARADA DI LUZ SAN NICOLAS SAN NICOLAS	8:00PM - 2:00AM
SATURDAY FEB 18	SAN NICOLAS GRAND CARNIVAL PARADE SAN NICOLAS	12:00PM - 6:00PM
SUNDAY FEB 19	ARUBA'S 69TH GRAND CARNIVAL PARADE ORANJESTAD	11:00AM - 6:00PM
SUNDAY FEB 19	BURNING OF MOMO - CARNIVAL 69 CARNIVAL HARBOUR ARENA	7:00PM - 9:00PM
MONDAY FEB 20	CARNIVAL MONDAY	
TUESDAY FEB 21	OLD MASK PARADE SAN NICOLAS	8:00PM - 12:00AM
WEDNESDAY FEB 22	ASH WEDNESDAY	



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

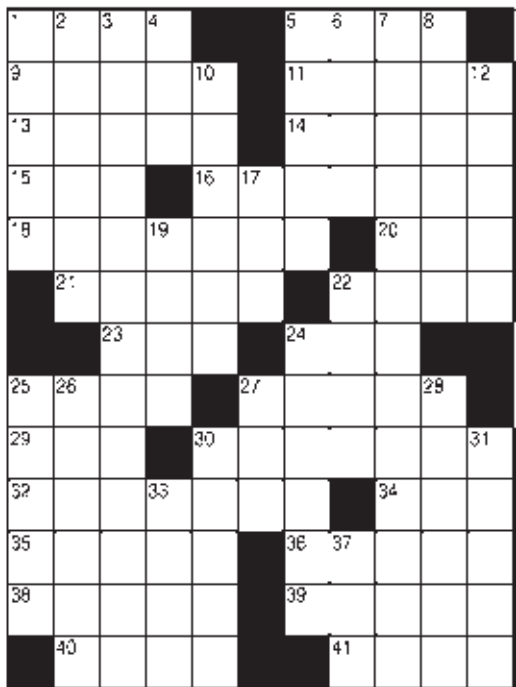
- ACROSS**
- 1 Dearth
 - 5 Thin cut
 - 9 Rose pest
 - 11 Broken, in a way
 - 13 Ill will
 - 14 Plentiful
 - 15 Building wing
 - 16 Gym item
 - 18 Station workers
 - 20 Nonsense
 - 21 Wave setting
 - 22 Storage spots
 - 23 Sturdy wood
 - 24 Pot brew
 - 25 Mailbox part
 - 27 Bargains
 - 29 Join together
 - 30 Part of a London bus
 - 32 Outside our atmosphere
 - 34 "Exodus" hero
 - 35 Furtive fellow
 - 36 Made mistakes
 - 38 Door part

DOWN

- 1 Surgical tool
- 2 Orchard crop
- 3 Arthur C. Clarke book
- 4 Young fox
- 5 Sky sights
- 6 Flock member
- 7 Arthur C. Clarke book
- 8 Rat out
- 10 Go ashore
- 12 Shoulder muscles
- 17 Zoo beast
- 19 Winter wear
- 22 Rosary unit
- 24 Conical abodes
- 25 Sweeping sound
- 26 "Of Mice and Men" character
- 27 Clinic nickname
- 28 Phone part
- 30 Occupied
- 31 Boy, slangily
- 33 News-paper part
- 37 Carnival city



Yesterday's answer



1-20

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

1-20

CRYPTOQUOTE

NCYF ZLVR SEC KYXD — YJF

NCS VSECLG KCNHCWC SECU

YLC HJ ZLVJS — JONGVJ

RYJFCNY

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: WE CAN'T SAVE THE WORLD BY PLAYING BY THE RULES. BECAUSE THE RULES HAVE TO BE CHANGED. — GRETA THUNBERG

P&G sees shoppers reduce purchases amid price hikes

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO

AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Procter & Gamble Co., the maker of such iconic household products like Crest toothpaste, Tide detergent and Charmin toilet paper, is seeing shoppers cut back some of their purchases as they push back on price hikes.

The company said Thursday that sales slipped 1% in the latest quarter ended Dec. 31, the first quarterly sales decline since the mid-2017. Meanwhile, the number of products it sells globally fell 6% in the quarter half of that was because shoppers reduced purchases, while the rest was due to inventory productions, the company said.

Profits also fell 7% in the quarter.

Procter & Gamble, like many consumer product companies, enjoyed a sales surge during the height of the pandemic as



In this June 15, 2018, file photo a variety of Procter & Gamble products rest on a counter in East Derry, N.H.

Associated Press

shoppers stocked up on essentials. And even as consumers faced higher prices on everything from food to rent in recent months, they have remained fairly resilient when it came to essentials like laundry and shampoo compared to discretionary items like trendy clothing. P&G has also made sure to offer lower-priced versions in its portfolio to hold on to price-sensitive shoppers.

But Thursday's results show that the constant barrage of higher prices on everyday essentials is wearing down its consumers. P&G said it had to hike prices by 10% in the latest quarter and will keep raising prices as it seeks to offset higher costs in transportation, labor and other areas.

Ransomware shuts hundreds of Yum Brands restaurants in UK



A logo on a sign is displayed above a branch of KFC in the Surbiton suburb of south west, London, on Feb. 21, 2018.

Associated Press

By DEE-ANN DURBIN

AP Business Writer

A ransomware attack forced the parent company of KFC and Taco Bell to close several hundred restaurants in the United Kingdom this week.

A government filing posted Thursday says the attack impacted information technology systems.

Yum Brands said the attackers took company data, but that there is no evidence customer data was stolen.

Around 300 U.K. stores were closed for one day but are now operational, Yum said. There are more than 1,000 KFC and Taco Bell outlets in the U.K. and Ireland, according to company websites, yet it did not divulge which brands were impacted.

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Twitter auctions off blue bird memorabilia, pricey furniture

By **BARBARA ORTUTAY**
AP Technology Writer

A neon Twitter bird for \$35,000, anyone? How about a used industrial kitchen mixer for a good price? Going once

When Elon Musk wants to make a point, it can be pretty blunt. On the day he took over Twitter last fall, he walked in to the San Francisco company's headquarters carrying a sink. He tweeted "let that sink in." Get it?

After slashing the company's workforce, falling behind on rent and contract obligations, Twitter under the mercurial billionaire is now auctioning off memorabilia, fancy office furniture and professional kitchen equipment from its San Francisco offices, where large swaths now sit empty and free meals are a relic of the past.

With the auction, Musk's message is twofold: call attention to the perceived excesses of Twitter's previous administration while signaling that cost cutting at all costs is a top priority. The items fetching the highest bids, besides the neon bird, include a plain Twitter bird statue at over \$30,000 and a planter sculpture of the "@" symbol. Professional kitchen



A Twitter logo hangs outside the company's offices in San Francisco, on Dec. 19, 2022.

Associated Press

equipment, meanwhile, is going for tens of thousands of dollars. These include a commercial dehydrator, a fryer and a La Marzocco Strada semi-automatic espresso machine, which retails for around \$25,000 (the top bid as of Wednesday morning was \$12,000). Even when all added up, the money raised from the auction, which closes Wednesday, is unlikely to make a dent in Twitter's financial obligations. Musk bought Twitter for \$44 billion in October and the company is on the hook for about \$1 billion a year in interest payments from the deal. Most of Musk's wealth is tied to his ownership of Tesla shares, which

have lost more than 40% of their value since he took ownership of Twitter in late October. He sold nearly \$23 billion worth of the electric vehicle company's stock to fund the purchase since April, when he started building a position in Twitter. □



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AI tools can create new images, but who is the real artist?

By **MATT O'BRIEN** and **ARI-JETA LAJKA**

NEW YORK (AP) — Countless artists have taken inspiration from "The Starry Night" since Vincent Van Gogh painted the swirling scene in 1889.

Now artificial intelligence systems are doing the same, training themselves on a vast collection of digitized artworks to produce new images you can conjure in seconds from a smartphone app.

The images generated by tools such as DALL-E, Midjourney and Stable Diffusion can be weird and otherworldly but also increasingly realistic and customizable. Ask for a "peacock owl in the style of Van Gogh" and they can churn out something that might look similar to what you imagined.

But while Van Gogh and other long-dead master painters aren't complaining, some living artists and photographers are starting to fight back against the AI software companies creating images derived from their works.

Two new lawsuits one this week from the Seattle-based photography giant Getty Images take aim at popular image-generating services for allegedly copying and processing millions of copyright-protected images without a license.

Getty said it has begun legal proceedings in the High Court of Justice in London against Stability AI, the maker of Stable Diffusion for infringing intellectual property rights to benefit the London-based startup's commercial interests.

Another lawsuit filed Friday in a U.S. federal court in San Francisco describes AI image-generators as "21st-century collage tools that violate the rights of millions of artists." The lawsuit, filed by three working artists on behalf of others like them, also names Stability AI as a defendant, along with San Francisco-based image-generator startup Midjourney, and the online gallery DeviantArt.

The lawsuit said AI-generated images "compete in



Visitors view artist Refik Anadol's "Unsupervised" exhibit at the Museum of Modern Art, Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in New York.

Associated Press

the marketplace with the original images. Until now, when a purchaser seeks a new image 'in the style' of a given artist, they must pay to commission or license an original image from that artist." Companies that provide image-generating services typically charge users a fee. After a free trial of Midjourney through the chatting app Discord, for instance, users must buy a subscription that starts at \$10 per month or up to \$600 a year for corporate memberships. The startup OpenAI also charges for use of its DALL-E image generator, and StabilityAI offers a paid service called DreamStudio.

Stability AI said in a statement that "Anyone that believes that this isn't fair use does not understand the technology and misunderstands the law."

In a December interview with The Associated Press, before the lawsuits were filed, Midjourney CEO David Holz described his image-making subscription service as "kind of like a search engine" pulling in a wide swath of images from across the internet. He compared copyright concerns about the technology with how such laws have adapted to human creativity. "Can a person look at somebody else's picture and learn from it and make

a similar picture?" Holz said. "Obviously, it's allowed for people and if it wasn't, then it would destroy the whole professional art industry, probably the non-professional industry too. To the extent that AIs are learning like people, it's sort of the same thing and if the images come out differently then it seems like it's fine." The copyright disputes mark the beginning of a backlash against a new generation of impressive tools some of them introduced just last year that can generate new images, readable text and computer code on command.

They also raise broader concerns about the propensity of AI tools to amplify misinformation or cause other harm. For AI image generators, that includes the creation of nonconsensual sexual imagery.

Some systems produce photorealistic images that can be impossible to trace, making it difficult to tell the difference between what's real and what's AI. And while most have some safeguards in place to block offensive or harmful content, experts say it's not enough and fear it's only a matter of time until people utilize these tools to spread disinformation and further erode public trust.

"Once we lose this capability of telling what's real and

what's fake, everything will suddenly become fake because you lose confidence of anything and everything," said Wael Abd-Elmageed, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Southern California.

As a test, The Associated Press submitted a text prompt on Stable Diffusion featuring the keywords "Ukraine war" and "Getty Images." The tool created photo-like images of soldiers in combat with warped faces and hands, pointing and carrying guns. Some of the images also featured the Getty watermark, but with garbled text. AI can also get things wrong, like feet and fingers or details on ears that can sometimes give away that they're not real, but there's no set pattern to look out for. And those visual clues can also be edited. On Midjourney, for instance, users often post on the Discord chat asking for advice on how to fix distorted faces and hands.

With some generated images traveling on social networks and potentially going viral, they can be challenging to debunk since they can't be traced back to a specific tool or data source, according to Chirag Shah, a professor at the Information School at the University of Washing-

ton, who uses these tools for research. "You could make some guesses if you have enough experience working with these tools," Shah said. "But beyond that, there is no easy or scientific way to really do this."

But for all the backlash, there are many people who embrace the new AI tools and the creativity they unleash. Searches on Midjourney, for instance, show curious users are using the tool as a hobby to create intricate landscapes, portraits and art.

There's plenty of room for fear, but "what can else can we do with them?" asked the artist Refik Anadol this week at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, where he displayed an exhibit of his AI-generated work.

At the Museum of Modern Art in New York, Anadol designed "Unsupervised," which draws from artworks in the museum's prestigious collection including "The Starry Night" and feeds them into a massive digital installation generating animations of mesmerizing colors and shapes in the museum lobby.

The installation is "constantly changing, evolving and dreaming 138,000 old artworks at MoMA's Archive," Anadol said. "From Van Gogh to Picasso to Kandinsky, incredible, inspiring artists who defined and pioneered different techniques exist in this artwork, in this AI dream world."

For painters like Erin Hanson, whose impressionist landscapes are so popular and easy to find online that she has seen their influence in AI-produced visuals, she is not worried about her own prolific output, which makes \$3 million a year.

She does, however, worry about the art community as a whole.

"The original artist needs to be acknowledged in some way or compensated," Hanson said. "That's what copyright laws are all about. And if artists aren't acknowledged, then it's going to make it hard for artists to make a living in the future." □

Brooksby tops No. 2 Ruud; Jabeur out, too; Djokovic wins

By HOWARD FENDRICH

AP Tennis Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— Oh-so-close to completing a straight-set upset of No. 2 seed Casper Ruud at the Australian Open, Jenson Brooksby frittered away three match points, sat down at a changeover and began yelling at himself.

"How?! How?! God!!!"

His face was flush, his emotions unhidden, his game unraveling. Soon enough, that set slipped away, as Ruud's confidence seemed to surge and Brooksby's collapse momentarily continued. And then, in a blink, Brooksby was back in charge, taking command immediately in the fourth set along the way to a 6-3, 7-5, 6-7 (4), 6-2 victory over Ruud and a spot in a surprisingly American-filled third round at Melbourne Park.

"I was getting a little more frustrated out there that I didn't close it out, and my mentality was changing a little bit," said the 39th-ranked Brooksby, who sipped from little jars of pickle juice in the fourth set at Rod Laver Arena. "Those are the situations you have to handle sometimes in matches, and you're going to face. I think the biggest question is: How do you respond? I just told myself to reset."

So leave it to a pair of 20-something Californians to rid the men's bracket of its two highest seeded players: Brooksby, 22, delivered his unexpected triumph at the same stage and in the same stadium that Mackenzie McDonald, 27, defeated No. 1 seed and defending champion Rafael Nadal a day earlier. That makes this the first Grand Slam tournament since the 2002 Australian Open that the Nos. 1-2 seeds lost before the end of the second round and the first time since the 1994 French Open that a pair of Americans took out the top two men's seeds at any Grand Slam tournament.

Nadal owns a men's-record 22 Grand Slam titles. Ruud was the runner-up at the French Open to Nadal

last June and at the U.S. Open to Carlos Alcaraz last September.

Like Ruud, Ons Jabeur

against COVID-19.

Also a big deal: The progress of U.S. men through the year's first major champi-

you think everything is looking dim, everything is looking dark, there's light at the end of the tunnel," the

topping Shelby Rogers 6-3, 6-1 after trailing 3-1 early, and No. 19 Ekaterina Alexandrova defeated Taylor Townsend 1-6, 6-2, 6-3.

"I literally have the chills, because the fans here are just incredible," said Volynets, who reached the third round of a Grand Slam tournament for the first time. "I've never played in a stadium this packed and with that many people keeping the energy up for me. It was awesome."

Brooksby was supposed to enter the Australian Open a year ago but came down with COVID-19 the day before he was supposed to fly overseas.

"Hopefully this is the first of many many good years here to come," Brooksby said.

His unusual playing style, including his two-handed backhand volleys, and ability to track down opponent's shots, were trouble for Ruud, who took a medical timeout after the second set because of a bothersome abdominal muscle. "He was annoyingly good today," said Ruud, a 24-year-old Norwegian coached by his father, a former pro player.

The biggest problem for Brooksby was closing this one out. He held a trio of match points while trying to serve for the victory at 5-3 in the third set but could not cash any of them in.

Ruud raced through the end of that set, but Brooksby righted himself in the fourth, jumping out to a 3-0 lead. Brooksby finished things off 1 hour, 15 minutes after his first chance.

When the match ended, Brooksby said, "The first thing that popped to my mind was I was just proud of my mental resolve just to stay focused out there." □



Jenson Brooksby of the U.S. reacts after winning the first set against Casper Ruud of Norway in their second round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Thursday, Jan. 19, 2023.

Associated Press

reached the finals of two Grand Slam tournaments in 2002. Like Ruud, she came to Australia as the No. 2 seed. And like Ruud, she was bounced in the second round, beaten 6-1, 5-7, 6-1 by 2019 French Open runner-up Marketa Vondrousova in a match that ended at about 1 a.m. on Friday.

That was actually rather mundane compared to what Andy Murray and Thanasi Kokkinakis went through, starting the fifth set of their match at about 3 a.m. Murray ended up with a 4-6, 6-7 (4), 7-6 (5), 6-3, 7-5 victory that ended just past 4 a.m.

The exits of Nadal and Ruud make nine-time champion Novak Djokovic who dealt with a persistent heckler and a left hamstring that he says worries him during a four-set victory over 191st-ranked qualifier Enzo Couacaud on Thursday night even more of a title favorite in his return to Australia after being deported a year ago because he was not vaccinated

onship. None has won a Grand Slam title since Andy Roddick at the 2003 U.S. Open.

By reaching the third round, Brooksby joined countrymen Michael Mmoh, Ben Shelton, Tommy Paul and J.J. Wolf, who also won Thursday, along with McDonald, No. 16 Frances Tiafoe and No. 29 Sebastian Korda, who all won Wednesday. The highest-seeded American man, though, could not make it that far: No. 8 Taylor Fritz bowed out with a 6-7 (4), 7-6 (2), 6-4, 6-7 (6), 6-2 loss to 113th-ranked Australian wild-card entry Alexei Popyrin.

Still, the eight men from the United States remaining are the most into the third round in Australia since the same number did it in 1996. Mmoh, who lost in qualifying but got into the main draw when another player withdrew, made it this far at a major tournament for the first time by defeating No. 12 Alexander Zverev 6-7 (1), 6-4, 6-3, 6-2.

"Life is crazy. Right when

107th-ranked Mmoh said. "My week is proof of that." Shelton, the NCAA champion from the University of Florida participating in just his second Slam, beat qualifier Nicolas Jarry of Chile 7-6 (3), 7-6 (3), 7-5; Paul came back to edge No. 30 Alejandro Davidovich Fokina of Spain 6-2, 2-6, 6-7 (4), 6-3, 6-4; and Wolf breezed past No. 23 Diego Schwartzman of Argentina 6-1, 6-4, 6-4.

Brooksby now plays Paul; Mmoh takes on Wolf.

"Frances is probably my best friend. I grew up with Tommy," Mmoh said. "I've known these guys for so long. I've competed with them."

There was also a big win for an American woman Thursday: 21-year-old qualifier Katie Volynets defeated No. 9-seeded Veronika Kudermetova of Russia 6-4, 2-6, 6-2.

Elsewhere, No. 4 Caroline Garcia beat 2021 U.S. Open finalist Leylah Fernandez 7-6 (5), 7-5, No. 5 Aryna Sabalenka improved her 2023 record to 6-0 by

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NFL: 5 teams to play home games in Germany, London in 2023

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

The Buffalo Bills, Tennessee Titans, Jacksonville Jaguars, Kansas City Chiefs and New England Patriots will each play international games during the NFL's 2023 regular season.

The Chiefs and Patriots will play in Germany. The Bills, Titans and Jaguars will play in London. The Bills and Titans are the designated home teams for two games at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, while the Jaguars will host a game at Wembley Stadium as part of their multi-year commitment to playing in the United Kingdom.

The league announced the plans on Thursday.

Opponents, dates and times for the games will be released when the full schedule is announced later this year.

There will be no international game in Mexico in 2023 due to renovations taking place in Estadio Azteca in Mexico City.

"We have a long history and we continue to grow but these international games are pivotal," NFL executive Peter O'Reilly told the AP. "Those who have been there and experienced it, you just see the passion of the fans in these markets. This is the chance



Kansas City Chiefs running back Isiah Pacheco (10) struggles for yardage as Las Vegas Raiders safety Duron Harmon (30) defends during the second half of an NFL football game Saturday, Jan. 7, 2023, in Las Vegas.

for them to experience the best of the NFL live and it's an opportunity for year-round engagement with the fans there. There's nothing bigger and better than an NFL game and those teams to be there in those markets and putting it on in a stadium."

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers defeated the Seattle Seahawks in Munich in the NFL's first regular-season game in Germany this season. The destination cities for the 2023 games will be

announced later this year. The NFL previously confirmed that Munich and Frankfurt will host games in Germany over the next four years.

The Chiefs and Patriots are part of the league's International Home Marketing Area program, which sees teams secure international marketing rights in countries beyond the United States, with both sides having been awarded rights in Germany.

The Bills and Titans will play

their second games in London. The Bills lost to the Jaguars in London in 2015. The Titans lost to the Chargers there in 2018. The Jaguars will play their 10th game in London. The Chiefs, Bills and Jaguars are playing AFC divisional playoff games this weekend.

"We could not be more excited to participate in a Germany game and introduce more of the world to Chiefs Kingdom this fall," Chiefs chairman and CEO Clark Hunt said in a state-

ment. "Our team and our fans have had incredible experiences in London and Mexico City as part of the International Series in the past, and we look forward to helping the NFL in its effort to continue growing the game in Germany."

The Patriots are 3-0 in international games.

"We are thrilled to be selected to play in Germany this year," Patriots chairman and CEO Robert Kraft said.

"We are undefeated in our three previous international games, thanks in part to the outstanding support from our fans. We know that some of our most passionate fans reside in Germany, and we look forward to finally playing a game there. We know the fans will create an amazing atmosphere.

We are sure it will be a memorable experience and one of the highlights of the 2023 season."

The NFL's expansion to 17 regular-season games gives teams a ninth home game in alternating seasons. Up to four of the teams from the conference whose teams are eligible for that ninth regular-season home game are designated to play a neutral-site international game each year. □

Antetokounmpo passes Durant for East All-Star voting lead

By **TIM REYNOLDS**
AP Basketball Writer

PARIS (AP) — Milwaukee's Giannis Antetokounmpo



Milwaukee Bucks forward Giannis Antetokounmpo (34) drives against Atlanta Hawks' De'Andre Hunter (12) and Dejounte Murray (5) during the first half of an NBA basketball game Wednesday, Jan. 11, 2023, in Atlanta.

Associated Press

has passed Brooklyn's Kevin Durant for the All-Star Game voting lead among Eastern Conference players, now putting him on track to be a captain for the Feb. 19 game in Salt Lake City.

Antetokounmpo had 5,970,196 votes entering Thursday, the NBA said in the third update of the All-Star balloting. Durant is 132,014 votes behind, with 5,838,182.

LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers remains the overall voting leader, with 6,506,682 votes. James has been a captain in all five of the NBA's previous uses of the format where the lead-

ing vote-getters from the Eastern and Western conferences get to pick their rosters from the other selections. James' teams are 5-0 in All-Star games when he is a captain.

Durant who was the voting leader from the East at each of the first two balloting updates this year, but has been sidelined of late with a sprained knee ligament has been the captain as the East's voting leader in each of the past two years. Antetokounmpo was in the previous two years, 2019 and 2020.

The top three frontcourt players and top two guards in each conference will be

chosen as starters, with the leading overall vote-getters from each conference serving as captains and choosing their teams.

James tops the list of West frontcourt players. Denver's Nikola Jokic remained in second (4,718,218) and the Lakers' Anthony Davis remained third (3,838,171).

Antetokounmpo leapfrogged Durant among East frontcourt balloting, and Boston's Jayson Tatum stretched his lead over Philadelphia's Joel Embiid for the third spot in the voting among those players. Tatum had 4,521,414 votes, while Embiid had 4,318,035. □